

Yellowstone National Park

Bear Safety Brief

Bear Spray Series No. 1: Selecting Proper Bear Spray

Bear spray has proven to be an effective, non-lethal, bear deterrent capable of stopping aggressive behavior in bears. The proper use of bear spray will reduce human injuries caused by bears as well as the number of grizzly bears killed in self defense. When carrying bear spray, it is important that you select an EPA approved product that is specifically designed to stop aggressive behavior from bears. Personal defense, jogger defense, and law enforcement or military defense spray's may not contain the correct active ingredients or have the proper delivery system to divert or stop a charging or attacking bear.

Selecting A Proper Bear Spray:

- All bear sprays must be registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Only use bear spray products that clearly state "for deterring attacks by bears." The EPA registration number is displayed on the front label.
- EPA registered bear spray's, have an active ingredient, clearly shown on the label, of 1% to 2% Capsaicin and related Capsaicinoids. The active ingredient is what affects the bears eyes, nose, mouth, throat, and lungs.
- EPA registered bear spray's have a minimum duration of at least 6 seconds or more to compensate for multiple bears, wind, bears that may zigzag, circle, or charge multiple times, and for the hike out after you have stopped a charging bear.
- EPA registered bear spray's shoot a minimum distance of 25 feet or more to reach the bear at a distance sufficient for the bear to react to effects of the active ingredients in time to divert or stop the bears charge and give the bear time to retreat.
- EPA registered bear spray's have a minimum content of 7.6 oz or 215 grams.
- Each Bear Management Office staff member or volunteer working in bear country should carry a can of bear spray in a quickly accessible fashion. Bear spray should also be readily available in the sleeping, cooking, and toilet areas of backcountry camps.
- Be sure the expiration date on your bear spray is current.



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Safety Tip: Make sure you are carrying EPA approved Bear Spray as your bear deterrent, don't depend on personal defense products to stop a charging bear.